

## **GENDER DYNAMICS IN *SAMA-BAJO* FISHERIES: CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN BLUE SWIMMING CRAB AND TUNA VALUE CHAINS**

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Small-scale fisheries (SSF) in Indonesia provide essential livelihoods for millions of people. As the world's largest archipelagic country, Indonesia faces major challenges in its export-oriented fishery sector, including the depletion of marine resources due to ecosystem degradation and persistent poverty among local value chain actors, such as fishers, processors, and traders. These challenges are particularly evident in Indonesia's Blue Swimming Crab (BSC) and tuna value chains.

While women play crucial roles in Indonesian fisheries, their contributions are often undervalued and underrepresented. Research applying gender and intersectionality approaches to export-driven fishery value chains in Eastern Indonesia remains limited, particularly in Fisheries Management Area (WPP NRI) 714, from Tolo Bay to the Banda Sea. Studies of the *Sama-Bajo* community in Southeast Sulawesi within this context are mainly absent from the literature.

To address these gaps, this study investigates *Sama-Bajo* women's roles and challenges in two fishery value chains in Southeast Sulawesi. It explores how gender norms influence opportunities and barriers in post-harvest activities such as processing and trading. By analyzing two key fisheries—BSC and tuna—through a gendered value chain constraints framework, we can identify which groups of women face the most significant challenges. The research draws on qualitative data from single-gender focus group discussions, small-group interviews, key informant interviews with fishery stakeholders (men, women, and transgender individuals), and participant observation.

This study analyzes the value chain, focusing on gender dynamics and the specific constraints women face due to gender norms and stereotypes. We explore how these challenges vary by role, marital status, age, and ethnicity, and suggest ways to address them. The findings indicate that export-oriented value chains rely on women, especially in post-harvest activities. We recommend solutions such as childcare facilities at work, dedicated market spaces for *Sama-Bajo* women, recycling initiatives, and leveraging women-led financial institutions to overcome barriers.